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SUBJECT: ANKARA MEDIA REACTION REPORT
WEDNESDAY, MARCH 12, 2003

THIS REPORT WILL PRESENT A TURKISH PRESS SUMMARY UNDER THREE THEMES:

HEADLINES
BRIEFING
EDITORIAL OPINION

HEADLINES

MASS APPEALS
The EU blackmail - *Hurriyet*
Erdogan works to form his cabinet - *Hurriyet*
Erdogan finds an EU warning on his first day - *Sabah*
EU warns Turkey: What bad timing - *Milliyet*
Turkey faces the threat of being called an invader - *Aksam*
EU gives a harsh warning - *Vatan*

OPINION MAKERS
US military work is under tight supervision - *Cumhuriyet*
The Cyprus nightmare begins - *Radikal*
Erdogan's victory - *Yeni Safak*
Cyprus settlement at a complete dead-end/EU threatens Turkey
- *Zaman*

FINANCIAL JOURNALS
IMF conditionality for US economic aid - *Dunya*
Chhibber retracts comments - *Finansal Forum*

BRIEFING

New government: Papers report that the new cabinet will be announced either today or tomorrow under the leadership of Tayyip Erdogan. Erdogan was quoted as saying there would be 'no significant change' in the cabinet, but the general expectation in the press is that a government reshuffle will reduce the total number of ministers from 25 to 23. Newly-resigned Prime Minister Gul is expected to become Foreign Minister and Deputy PM in the 59th government.

Iraq: Stories analyzes the Iraq issue from two angles. The ongoing military work and build-up in southeast Turkey, and the possible timing of the authorization request from the parliament. Television reports speculate that Erdogan will leave anti-war ministers out of the cabinet list, so that the parliament will have an easier time passing the resolution. The general expectation is that the issue will be taken up first thing after the new government takes charge. "Hurriyet" notes that during the phone call from President Bush to Erdogan, the US asked permission for an air corridor, but Erdogan said such a decision would require parliamentary approval. A story in "Radikal" notes that all of the ongoing US military activities is carried under the guidance and coordination of the Turkish military. Using the Turkish General Staff as its source, the story highlights that the first authorization decree provided a certain degree of military activities for the US, and that the US has never gone beyond the authorized limits. Meanwhile "Yeni Safak" writes that due to insistence of some CHP parliamentarians, the TGS is going to send a group of military inspectors to the sites to ensure that US activities are within the framework of the agreement. Opposition leader Baykal sharply criticized the government for its handling of the Iraq issue. Baykal accused the government of 'making a promise for the second authorization decree behind the scenes.' Otherwise, Baykal argues, there would be no large US military build-up in Turkey's border area.

Cyprus: Failure of the Annan plan is a main highlight in today's Turkish press. The front-page stories all note two warnings from the EU: that Turkey will be viewed as an 'occupying force' on EU territory, and that the failure of the Annan Plan will be an obstacle to Turkey's efforts to begin membership negotiations with the EU. Most newspapers interpret the EU warnings either blackmail or a threat. "Radikal" notes that the Cyprus issue is turning into a nightmare, while the nationalist "Ortadogu" applauds Denktas for being solid and strong against 'internal and external traitors.'

EDITORIAL OPINION:

- a) Iraq/UN process
- b) Cyprus

"The UN needs a reform"
Yilmaz Oztuna opined in the mass appeal-conservative Turkiye (3/12): "Under its current structure, the United Nations is being used as a means to serve the interests of certain countries. It has failed to present itself as above interests of individual states, and it has not been fully obeying its founding laws and principles. The UN is urgently in need of a reform process in order not to turn it into a kind of 'League of Nations.' The restructuring also requires a change in UNSC membership. . For example, oddly enough, Japan and India have never been a part of the Security Council. Turkey, for instance, was never elected to the UNSC while three African nations, two of which are former French colonies, have membership. The US, a driving force in both NATO and the UN, is well aware of the need for reform. Although very few Turkish politicians are aware of this, the fact of the matter is that the US is in the process of establishing a new world order - a Pax Americana."

"Cyprus issue requires a miracle"
Erdal Guven analyzed the current status of the Cyprus issue in the liberal-intellectual Radikal (3/12): "Unfortunately, the Cyprus question has now fully consumed another settlement effort to no avail. UNSG Annan has clearly given up on the plan he designed and continually referred to as a 'last chance.' The plan itself is still on the table, yet there is no authority any more to claim responsibility for it. Without the UN's mediation, it will be a miracle if the two sides reach a settlement by themselves. . I am afraid the Turkish Cypriot side is rapidly turning into another 'East Germany.'"

PEARSON